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FM AMCONSUL CURACAO
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2291
INFO RUEHTC/AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE 0282
RHMFIUU/DAVIS MONTHAN AFB AZ
RUMIAAA/USCINCSO MIAMI FL
RHMFIUU/JIATF SOUTH
RUEABND/DEA SAN JUAN PR
RUEABND/DEA HQS WASHDC
RUEHCV/AMEMBASSY CARACAS 0426
RUEHAO/AMCONSUL CURACAO 3302

UNCLAS CURACAO 000056

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR WHA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [NA](#) [AA](#) [NL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#)

SUBJECT: NETHERLANDS ANTILLES DISSOLUTION SET FOR NO LATER THAN
OCTOBER 31, 2010

REF: A) CURACAO 000012; B) CURACAO 000032; C) CURACAO 000038; D) CURACAO 000
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11. Netherlands Antilles (NA) Prime Minister De Jongh-Elhage announced following June 24 multilateral discussions that the target date for dissolution of the Antilles has been moved from January to no later than October 31, 2010. Visiting Dutch State Secretary for Kingdom Relations Bijleveld-Schouten indicated that the final date will be decided during scheduled September, 2009 political consultations. Curacao's May, 2009 "YES" vote referendum victory (reftels) cleared the path to proceed with dissolution, but there has been widespread speculation that required legislation and structural changes could not be implemented in time to meet the original January, 2010 target date. The new target date also applies to the transition of the BES islands (Bonaire, St. Eustatius, and Saba) to special overseas municipalities within the Netherlands. The island governments in St. Eustatius and Saba are proceeding with the dissolution process, while Bonaire's new island government is reviewing the agreements with the Dutch and may be considering holding its own "YES/NO" referendum.

12. The mandate for the current NA government expires in March, 12010. PM De Jongh-Elhage said that "none of the islands of the Netherlands Antilles want new elections" for a disappearing political entity, and that she supports having the current government continue until dissolution. Dutch State Secretary Bijleveld-Schouten reportedly also supports this position, but several opposition party members have said that cancelling NA parliamentary elections would be unconstitutional and that they will protest any extension of the current government. If the announced plan is approved, then the next elections would be for the BES municipalities and the semi-autonomous "countries" of Curacao and St. Maarten. The NA government has announced that it will form a working group to make recommendations regarding extension of the current government and to set new election dates.

13. COMMENT: Reaction to the new target date so far has been muted, as most people recognize the complicated nature of the dissolution process. The Opposition, however, will likely challenge the plan to continue the current government.

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